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Vol. IV.—No. 163. MANCHESTER, Saturday, SEPTEMBER 23rd. Price One Penny.

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For Hire—Gold, Gilt, and Electro-plated Epergnes, Candelabra, Silver Plate, Cutlery, China, Linen, Tables, Rout Seats, Chairs, Tents, and everything required for entertainments.
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ESTABLISHED 110 YEARS.
KENT'S CELEBRATED WATCHES,
18 Carat Gold Hall Marked Chains, £5 0s. 0d. per ounce, Weight and Fashion included.
70, DEANSGATE.

Pure Port Wine, Bottled in Oporto, and Shipped by A. B. CASSEL'S guaranteed REALLY PURE, and possessing all the characteristics desired by *connoisseurs*, in cases of 1, 2, or 3 dozen; also in Quarter Casks and Octaves.—J. F. MOONEY, SOLE AGENT, OXFORD CHAMBERS, OXFORD STREET, ST. PETER'S.

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THIS (FRIDAY) EVENING AT EIGHT.

THE WORLD OF MAGIC & SECOND SIGHT.

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OF

PROFESSOR ANDERSON AND HIS DAUGHTERS AT THE FREE TRADE HALL.

This Evening (FRIDAY, the 22nd), Last Night but Seven;
SATURDAY, the 23rd, Last Night but Six, in the Small Hall;
MONDAY, the 25th, in the Large Hall, Last Night but Five;
TUESDAY, the 26th, Last Night but Four;
WEDNESDAY, the 27th,

LAST GRAND DAY PERFORMANCE AT 2-30,

and Last Night but Three;
THURSDAY, the 28th, MISS LOUISE ANDERSON'S BENEFIT, and Last Night but Two;
FRIDAY, the 29th, Last Night but One, Professor ANDERSON'S BENEFIT, and Last Performance but One in Manchester.
SATURDAY, the 30th, in the Small Hall, Last Performance of Professor Anderson and his Daughters in Manchester.

Reserved and Numbered Stalls, 3s.; First Class, 2s.; Second, 1s.; Galleries and Area, 6d.
Ticket-office open from ten until three at the Hall.

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THE RE-OPENING WILL TAKE PLACE ON MONDAY, SEPT. 18.

DURING the Recess the Theatre has been entirely Enriched and Redecorated. Increased attention has been given to every part of the Auditorium. The Private Boxes, Stalls, and Dress Circle completely and elegantly Re-furnished. The Upper Circle and Pit rendered still more roomy and accessible, and every part of the house studiously re-arranged, with the view to the perfect accommodation of the public.
The Alterations and Improvements under the direction of Mr. ALFRED DARBYSHIRE.
The Redecorations by Mr. GEORGE GORDON and Assistants. The Upholstery and Fittings by Mr. THOMAS CAVANAH.

PRODUCTION ON MONDAY NEXT, 18th SEPTEMPER, OF SHAKSPERE'S

MERCHANT OF VENICE,

ARRANGED FOR REPRESENTATION BY CHARLES CALVERT.

THE SCENERY
By WILLIAM TELBIN and W. TELBIN, Jun.; HAWES CRAVEN, WALTER HANN, GEORGE GORDON, PHILLIPS, &c.

PERIOD—THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

THE COSTUMES DESIGNED BY ALFRED THOMPSON.

THE INCIDENTAL MUSIC
Selected by Mr. CALVERT, and Arranged by Mr. EDWARD WILLIAMS, excepting the Vocal and Instrumental Music accompanying
THE LORENZO MASQUE,
terminating the first act, which has been expressly written for this production by
ARTHUR S. SULLIVAN,
(The Eminent Composer), who will personally conduct, for a few nights, this part of the action of the play.

The Machinery and Effects by JOHN BYRNES. The Properties and Paraphernalia by HIRSCH, GARRETT, HINDSHAW, &c.

PRICES AS USUAL.

NOTICE.—In compliance with repeated applications, arrangements have been made by which persons desirous of avoiding the crowding that is sometimes unavoidable to the Upper Circle and Pit, may from 6 to 6 30 enter by the Dress Circle entrance on payment of an extra charge of 6d. After 6 30 the only admittance to the Upper Circle or Pit will be by the usual entrances and at the usual charges.
The performance will commence at Seven o'clock.——Box Office open daily, where places may be secured for any date.

EUROPEAN SEWING MACHINES
From 6l GUINEAS. Sews around Cuffs by means of an Arm, and Puts Sleeves in. AGENTS WANTED. 138, PORTLAND STREET, MANCHESTER.

Fragrant Tooth Wash,—FLUODENTINE, or Liquid Dentifrice. See Dr. Hassall's Report and Medical Testimony. Invaluable to Smokers. Sold by all Chemists at 1s. 6d., 3s., and 5s. a Bottle.—*Prepared at* HAMPSON'S *PHARMACY, 63, Piccadilly.*

[STUDIES IN NATURAL HISTORY.]

THE CONGREGATION.

AFTER having, very improperly no doubt, brought railing accusations against the Preacher in our last paper, it behoves us to administer a little stimulative ginger now to the Preachee, though he scarcely, in the nature of things, can require it so much as the Preacher, being a receptive creature altogether, and obliged by law to take what he is about to receive without grumbling—at all events, on the spot. The Preacher, as a quaint critic remarked, is a gentleman who monopolizes all the conversation. There is no one to contradict him; he has you in a vice, so to speak; for even if you shut your eyes in slumber a kindly beadle cob-nobbles you on the head to remind you that you must listen to the voice of the charmer. The law of this realm ordains that if you go to church you shall be preached at, and though probably the gentleman in the pulpit would be as glad to let you go without preaching as you would be yourself, he is not a free agent, for the churchwardens and the bishop keep a sharp look-out upon malingerers.

With such an amount of compression as all this amounts to, it seems a little hard, at first sight, to blame congregations at all for the indulgence they manifest to inexpert professors of the art of preaching, and yet we intend to do so. In the commercial markets we say that an article is worth what it will fetch (just as I shall have to say when I get paid for this article, blushing slightly at the honorarium), and if, therefore, an inferior article of pulpit manufacture fetches a decently large congregation and a competent income, which is often the case, why in the world should the preacher put an extra "pick" or two into his discourse? On the other hand, the congregation may ask, "How is our situation to be amended?" Can we go up to the rector of the parish—son of a nobleman, husband of a lady of title, a wrangler or a senior optime, chaplain to his brother, Lord Surcingle—and say, "Reverend sir, we respectfully suggest that you are an inferior preacher, and would you, in your pulpit ministrations, kindly oblige us by cutting it short?" Why, naturally, the reverend gentleman would tell the congregation to go to the ——. But let us proceed in our investigation of this interesting topic.

There is, no doubt, a difficulty in dealing with inefficient pulpit work, but, before we attempt to deal with the difficulty, we must ascertain whether the inefficiency be really appreciable to the bulk of people who attend churches and chapels. In our last paper we urged that the average run of church-goers did not know whether they got good stuff or bad. Many who might think it bad would distrust their own judgment, and refer their doubts to the whisperings of Satan; and, even if they did not do so themselves, one of the elders or deacons would be sure to accommodate them. Can anything so well intentioned as a sermon upon a sacred theme, preached in the house of God on the Sabbath day, be of inferior workmanship, and ought it not to be ticked off as correct without a murmur? That is a course of reasoning, no doubt, very often adopted. Little children, upon this principle, are reproved for yawning in church, or for manifesting signs of resentment at the discipline which makes them sit bolt upright and still during the dreary mangling of old clothes which Lord Surcingle's brother is conducting. In that incident you have the whole question. It is proper that you should so be bored if the parson likes so to bore you. Your godfathers and godmothers in your baptism pledged themselves that you should go through this painful ordeal, if it were presented to you. They passed through it before you—your godfather is worth £30,000—and by continuing in the same all the days of your life, probably you will make even a larger sum than he. No sermon, however bad, can prejudice your future career; better bad ones than none at all. Decency must be observed. In all probability it is you who are bad, and not the sermon, for the human heart is desperately wicked, and the human intellect, when exercised against a minister of the gospel, is very little better than the human heart. Indeed, exercised in a place of worship, the human intellect is not intellect at all, but pride, which is born of the devil, and so on. To adopt the slang phrase—"Is not that about the size of it?"

The clergy of the National Church are fond of styling their calling a "profession." They take rank with other professional men—lawyers, doctors, soldiers, sailors, and civil engineers—(from their list I always notice the poor schoolmaster is excluded, which is rather snobbish). Now, amongst these professional men the lawyer is the only one who goes, as it is called, as a talker, on all fours with the parson. Mind, I only say as a talker, and I restrict the quadrupedal simile to that and that alone. We have lawyers who are good at law, but who are not good as advocates, consequently as advocates they are rarely employed. When they are the judge fidgets on the bench, the jury picks its teeth, or coughs, or blows its nose, the heart of the client drops into his boots, the audience at the back of the court begins to clear out, and it is only the gentlemen of the bar who sit still and pretend that their learned friend is doing his duty. But this species of game very soon rectifies itself, for the attorneys are wise in their generation. Let me respectfully inquire why the Preacher should not be subject to an analogous criticism? Granted that as the bad advocate may be a good lawyer, so the bad preacher may be a good theologian, an exemplary parish priest, a godly character altogether, but still not fit for pulpit work. Why, then, is pulpit work given him to do? It may be urged that congregations have not those facilities for expressing their want of interest which are open in the case of barristers to attorneys and clients, which is, to some extent, no doubt true as things are managed at present, but we must remember that where there's a will there's a way. If there be no will now it is because there is no knowledge, or very little, and that, what little there is, is environed with superstitions and old-fashioned prescriptions under whose iron heels a healthy independence of judgment is too frequently crushed.

I say, therefore, that it is in vain to expect any great improvement amongst preachers as long as the supineness of congregations is so manifest as it is at present. Natural stupidity is difficult to eradicate. A crusade amongst the dull dogs would be a well-nigh hopeless task, but it is the superstitious people that want arousing—the people who fear to speak out lest they should be deemed objectors to the sacrifices of the sanctuary, and who go on from year to year permitting the finest opportunities for the quickening of human souls to pass away unutilized. It seems to me that a grander field for missionary work was never presented to a God-fearing community than this. Encourage the great and the good Preachers everywhere, for the time comes, yea, now is, when the restless, turbulent world has need of them all. To put good and bad alike into a sack and shake them out indifferently, is, however, no encouragement, and never can be. An inapt, unreasoning, unsympathizing, slovenly, broken-kneed, broken-winded brother of the Levitical order ought not to be permitted by our congregations to hold forth at all. Better by far that the order of the priesthood should

be dissevered from that of the Preacher, and that the latter should be an order by itself, than that the congregations of the faithful, overpowered by the sacred character of the first, should suffer the glorious opportunities of the last to remain almost entirely a dead letter.

TACTICS OF THE ALLIANCE IN SALFORD.

THE peculiar dexterity of the wire-pullers of the United Kingdom Alliance commands our admiration almost as much as the unflagging perseverance of the Secretary of the National Union. The authorized exponents of Alliance principles take every possible opportunity of announcing and reiterating the perfect neutrality of their organization in things political. The programme is simple in the extreme—war to the knife against the sale of every beverage that contains a particle of the generous spirit of Bacchus. The connection that clearly exists, in many instances, between excessive drinking and misery, starvation, and crime, has induced many well-meaning philanthropists to give their support to the society under the impression that they were opposing the public-house interest, and in no way compromising their opinions on other subjects. A glance at the subscription lists proves this beyond a doubt. Whigs, Tories, and Radicals appear there side by side. In order to maintain the harmony of this happy family of social reformers, the Alliance is constantly declaring its independence of every political party, but the action of the Executive Committee is most skilfully so directed that it becomes, in practice, a valuable means of supporting a side in politics. With that aspiring Q.C., Mr. Pope, and the equally ambitious politician, Mr. Benjamin Whitworth, for its leaders, it could not possibly be otherwise. They are political or nothing.

In carrying out their views, without formally contravening the declared objects of the organization, the steersmen of the Alliance show a degree of ingenuity that does them credit, but they sometimes allow their policy to be seen through the film of neutral tint in which it is nominally shrouded. Thus, at Oxford, when a conflict was impending between Messrs. Cardwell and Vernon Harcourt on the Liberal side, and the Conservative candidate, Dr. Deane, although Dr. Deane spoke with far more clearness than his opponents against the continuance of the facilities for drinking, which our licensing system gives, and Messrs. Cardwell and Harcourt were the favourites of the licensed victuallers, the Oxford Branch of the Alliance declined to use its influence at all in the election, and its principal members were conspicuous supporters of the Liberal but anti-teetotal candidates.

In Salford, on the other hand, the Alliance have just begun a system of agitation of which the object is simply to secure, if possible, the return of two Liberals for that borough at a future election. The campaign was begun by a series of meetings held on Sunday in various parts of the borough, and an assemblage of the Anti-Barleycorn forces in the Town Hall on Monday. An itinerant town councillor of very pronounced views from Blackburn—a Mr. Gregson by name—was the chief representative of the main society on the occasion, and was careful to point out the eminently practical character of the agitation by asking his hearers to change their representatives at the next opportunity. Of course, if the Alliance choose to make an assault on the seats of *all* the opponents of the Permissive Prohibitory Bill, their right to attack the Salford members could not be questioned. It would be only a fair fight against their declared antagonists, and could not tell much in favour of either the Liberals or the Conservatives as a party. But the plain fact is that the Alliance does not act with the same vigour or enthusiasm where its opponents belong to the "great united Liberal party." There are more representatives of the brewers, distillers, and spirit merchants who sit on the Radical than on the Conservative benches, but it is against the latter only that the money and the organization of the Alliance are brought to bear. This does not seem a perfectly fair way of dealing with a subscription list in which the name of Birley appears and the clergy are strongly represented; but it quite suits the book of Messrs. Pope and Whitworth.

The fact seems to be that one idea, like that which is the main-spring of the Alliance, is not sufficient to decide alone the policy of shrewd men of the world like the Alliance leaders. The Anti-Corn-Law League professed to be independent of party equally with the United Kingdom Alliance, and the one is about as purely non-political as the other was.

CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICES.

ANY employer of labour, when his business is flourishing, will declare that he cannot get hands to do the work required. Such, generally speaking, is the case at present in and about Manchester. At he same time you can never advertise in the daily papers for anybody wanted—from a wet nurse to a town-clerk—without being inundated with applications from two hundred or three hundred eager candidates, who declare that their ability and integrity demand your confidence, and are ready to put their whole powers at your disposal for the sum you are prepared to pay.

We have lately examined a series of applications sent in reply to advertisements for public servants of different degrees of dignity, and the results of our investigations may cast some light on this obscure question. We found in all cases the same readiness to undertake the duties required; and the utter absence of any previous experience was evidently thought no bar to success. The following analysis of the occupations held by the candidates for an office lately vacant will serve as an illustration. Altogether there were 210, of whom

46	had been	previously	clerks,
31	,,	,,	book-keepers or cashiers
23	,,	,,	clergymen or ministers
22	,,	,,	schoolmasters
12	,,	,,	printers
11	,,	,,	librarians or librarians' assistants
7	,,	,,	stationers
7	,,	,,	attorneys
6	,,	,,	soldiers
5	,,	,,	commercial travellers
40	,,	,,	other occupations

Among the "other occupations" were included a shoemaker, two engineers, a "mechanic," a dancing master, and an actor. The situation which all these people deemed themselves qualified to fill was that of Assistant-Librarian in a large town not a hundred miles from Manchester. In the same manner, every occupation in the world seems to have been thought a proper preliminary training for the Clerkship of a School Board, which was competed for by barristers, clergymen, attorneys, military officers, superintendents of police, schoolmasters, pupil teachers, and letterpress printers.

It is not very surprising that men wish to change their business, and make light of the difficulties in the way, but it is certainly strange that gentlemen, who can look from an outsider's point of view at the candidate's chance of success, will aid in buoying up the would-be officials by giving them testimonials of fitness which they know are utterly worthless. It is only natural that a joiner who earns 30s. a week by hard work in his shirt sleeves, should think a librarianship at £100 per annum a place that would suit him better; but it is a pity for the benevolent ministers of all denominations, who are always figuring as testimonial writers, to foster the small ambition which they know is doomed to disappointment.

The notions of some candidates with regard to testimonials are rather amazing. Some rather carelessly send their originals instead of copies, and others, despite the plainest intimation of the advertisements answered, send no testimonials at all. "I have great pleasure in referring you to my late employer, who will, no doubt, give satisfactory answers to any questions you may ask," is a very common formula; and it is almost equally common to say, "I shall be happy to furnish testimonials if required." An adventurous "foreman," however, applying from Leeds for a situation in Manchester, hit upon the best idea:—"If you seriously think of giving me the place, send me word by return of post, and I will send you the names of my refferences *(sic.)*, and *tell you when to call upon them*, or, if more convenient, they will call upon you."

As a general rule, it may be said that not more than one-fourth or one-fifth of the applications sent in for every public office ought ever to

have been made; and the thirty or forty which remain as the result of a first sifting may easily be reduced by a little further examination to three or four. Strike out from the candidates whose general training and habits form proper qualifications, those who are too old or too young, those who are evidently "birds of passage," who would leave their situation as soon as they had become familiar with its duties, and those about whom a suspicious air of mystery hangs, and the contest generally remains to be decided between two or three men tolerably equal.

If ever any of our readers should be among the three who last dispute the field, we hope they may be lucky enough to have made a favourable impression on the bestowers of the prize. Personal influence is, of course, an evil in the distribution of public patronage; but when you come to a dead lock, *cæteris paribus*, a friend ought not to fare the worst, and certainly will not. As a rule, however, the man who has come out well in a fair competition once will do the same again, and will not long stand shivering in the cold. The men who are always expecting something to turn up, and cursing the ill luck by which they have never been able to succeed, are of the class which is always swept out of consideration at a glance. That they don't get situations is nothing strange; that they can afford ink, paper, and postage for their repeated attempts is really a wonder. They must, surely, beg or steal for a livelihood, and write applications "in answer to your advertisement" by way of amusement for their leisure hours. Their number, after all, is small: most of the candidates are in situations when they apply, and most of the remainder obtain them within a little time, if unsuccessful for the moment. Not unfrequently there is really a difficulty amid the swarm of applications to discover one man whose qualifications for the post he desires are really satisfactory, and, therefore, strange as it may seem, for public offices as well as for warehouses and factories, there is no surplus of efficient labour available. A man who has the qualifications within him may be under a cloud for a time, but he will never have a year without a summer.

AN EVENING WITH THE SECULARISTS.

WE lately spent an evening in the Secularist Debating Room in Grosvenor Street. For some weeks we had been conscious of a series of Secularist advertisements, appearing regularly in that column of our Saturday's paper which contains the call to "the outcast and the wanderer," and stating the subject for discussion on the following evening. We remember that, on the Saturday before our visit, the lecturer was advertised as an M.A. and an M.D. Perhaps it was the gentleman's titles which attracted us. But whatever may have been the immediate or remote cause of our advent in Grosvenor Street, we found ourselves, at a little before half-past six, climbing a flight of stairs inside a wooden construction, and, having deposited threepence with a man on the landing, proceeded to occupy a seat in a small and rather tightly crowded room. From the appearance of the walls we half-suspected that the room was sacred to a species of idolatry. A number of portraits and an insignificant sketch of a tomb—said to be the last resting place of the great Socialist, Robert Owen,—together with a quantity of ghastly medallions, looking at a distance like a collection of casts of the heads of beheaded criminals, and with that peculiar curved appearance about the necks which suggests that the decapitation was done with a flourish, were hung up behind the platform for the worship of the audience. There were also sundry placards containing something about anti-vaccination. On the platform was a piano and a table, on which were two or three jugs of flowers.

The evening's proceedings commenced apparently with a sale of literature, which seemed to comprise our old acquaintance, *The Medium and Daybreak*, a paper called *The Republican*, and sundry other productions from the pen of Mr. Bradlaugh. Novel theories appeared to be the rage. Presently a gentleman, with a look of prodigious importance upon his heated countenance, fluttered into the room and sat down before the piano. He was pointed out to us as that Mr. Tarr who promises to become a fixture in the police court, through his magnanimous efforts to outdoctor the doctors in the matter of vaccination. After him came the chairman and the lecturer. The mimic applause over, the chairman arose, and, with a look of wistful earnestness on his face, a look, indeed, which made us feel sad for him, gave out a hymn, something in praise either of Wisdom or of Truth, we forget which. This was sung by the audience with violent zeal, a certain ill-used letter of the alphabet being strongly *h*emphasized in a most unnecessary manner. When this was done the lecturer began to lecture.

Most public speakers have peculiar habits, into which they generally fall when addressing an audience. Thus, one man cannot talk unless he fumbles at his watchguard, another must tear up a piece of paper into minute portions, a third is obliged to trifle with a button. Dr. Sexton apparently drew his inspiration from his nose; the manner in which the learned gentleman attacked that protuberance with the right and left hand alternately, at the beginning of each sentence, was singular, and assuredly not graceful. His discourse was entitled, "Four theories as to the origin of Christianity." The prelude consisted of an allusion to certain lectures which have been recently delivered in London on the orthodox side of the question. Commenting upon these in a rather patronising manner, and distributing praise or blame to the authors, without quoting a single observation which had fallen from their lips, Dr. Sexton came down rather heavily upon Dr. Rigg, and asserted roundly that the Wesleyans were the most ignorant body of people under the sun. For this he was taken to task later on in the evening by one of the audience, who expressed his opinion that, in the matter of ignorance, the Methodists were eclipsed by the Secularists. The prelude finished, the lecturer proceeded with his subject. The essay was simply an attack upon the religion of Jesus Christ, conveniently divided into four sections. Ridiculing the idea that the gospel writers were inspired by God, because he saw difficulties in the way of literally accepting certain most beautiful figurative passages, Dr. Sexton yet objected to regard the Scriptures as part of a scheme of gigantic imposture, and elegantly remarking that he "would rather go the whole hog" than side with the Rationalists, who look upon the miracles as the result only of strange coincidences, he in some way arrived at the conclusion that the whole scheme upon which the Christian faith rests is a piece of mythology, resembling the mythologies of the ancients; a sort of modern Iliad, in fact.

It is not our purpose to enter here into a controversial review of the essay in question. We have already said that we do not think such controversies ever lead to any tangible good, or to any settlement of the disputed points. Suffice it to say that to our mind it appeared that, criticized even in the spirit in which Dr. Sexton approached them, the gospel narratives and gospel history would furnish answers to the objections raised which would prove at least as plausible as were the objections; while we were sorely puzzled to comprehend in what way the lecturer reconciled his various and antagonistic conclusions. Having said this much, a remark or two about the general character of the display will be more in our accustomed manner. We were simply astonished that a man of—professedly—scholarly education should be guilty of the flimsy folly which made up a considerable portion of the address. The lecturer seemed to find his best success, not in the faithful analysis which might prove interesting to men of education and thought, but in the frivolity which awakens the laughter of a half-learned crowd. It was a significant characteristic of the assembly, that to it humour appeared to be in a flippant handling of records which the best and wisest men who have lived have held sacred. One would have thought that the Book would, at least, have been safe from irreverent treatment. On the contrary, the more daring the sneer the louder the laughter of the audience. We will give one instance of what we call wanton and foolish trifling. For some reason or other it was considered necessary to sketch a character for Abraham. We are not sure of the reason, but we think it was in order to prove that Abraham never looked at the stars. After making some vulgar references to the Hebrew race of our own days, the lecturer gratuitously informed us that, in his opinion, Abraham was a narrow-souled old Jew, whose thoughts were too much employed upon his own selfish aggrandizement for it to be possible for him to glance often at the heavenly bodies. We wondered if the critic had ever read of the grand old patriarch's magnanimous dealings with Lot.

When the lecture was over, ten minutes were allowed to any speaker who might feel inclined to reply to the discourse; ample time, of course, in which to refute a composition which had occupied an hour and a half in the reading. Ample time, for all refutations would only have afforded matter for fresh discussion. The temper of the meeting was not that of a company of students desirous of acquiring knowledge; it was that of

a number of people met together to have its preconceived opinions ministered to by a paid lecturer. We do not object to healthy thought; indeed we have little respect for men who do not think. We believe that the Secularists of Grosvenor-street are on the whole well-meaning and sincere. But humility is the beginning of knowledge. The conceitedness of youth, fired with an idea, has apparently prevented many of those we saw the other evening from taking time to read and reflect. We thing that all are wrong who expect any intellectual advancement from such burlesque affairs. To us it seems that the immortality of the soul, man's responsibility and to whom, his escape from the sin mystery, his hopes of realising that perfection to which we presume the Secularists profess to aspire, are not questions to be studied in the noise and heat of a debating room, but in the silence of solitude, or—to speak paradoxically—in that Presence which we feel to be around us when alone.

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"SERMONIZERS" GOOD FOR MAD FOLK.

Mr. Editor,—While meditating on your last week's Study in Natural History—to wit the "Sermonizer"—it recurred to my memory that, some years ago, one or other of the authorities of this County Palatine, at Preston assembled, made the remarkable and brilliant discovery that orthodox preaching was a sovereign cure for insanity. "Upon this hint," as Othello says, a committee of magistrates was formed to try the experiment whether a parson would or would not be good for mad people. Accordingly they appointed one for three years, and that things might be done according to order, they allowed him £300 a-year. The result was that sermons were found more efficient than strait waistcoats, and the appointment of the parson was made permanent. One witness observed that the operation of the parson upon the patients was so wholesome that the conduct of the mad congregation would put to shame the behaviour of many assemblies of sane worshippers which he had attended. He mentioned, as a favourable example, that among the inmates was a poor wretched Italian, who was remarkable for the violence of his behaviour. "This man," added the witness, "was accustomed to spend his day in uttering loud imprecations, but on the days when divine service was performed, his conduct was more quiet, and the poor creature contented himself with muttering his curses in a low and indistinct tone." It does not appear from the evidence whether this comparative quiescence—this cursing not loud if deep—was attributable to the composing treatment administered by the parson, or to the fact of the Athanasian creed having formed part of that morning's service. If the former, the effect followed the cause in a very natural sequence—an effect often observable at my church in the case of persons of the very soundest minds.—Yours truly, A SERMON-HEARER ON COMPULSION.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

WHENEVER a new theatre is opened in London it is the uniform practice of the critics to term it the prettiest in town. Were this assertion not so hackneyed, we should without hesitation apply it to our Prince's Theatre, now that it is redecorated for the second time. We know no theatre in London worthy to be compared with it for richness, elegance, and, above all, originality of ornament. The sight which the dress circle, filled with what the London critics call "a brilliant audience," presented on the night of Tuesday last was really gorgeous. The ruling colour has been changed from green to red, and all the gas globes, ceilings, pillars, and surroundings, have been tinted. The result is a magnificence which is most striking, and a warmth of aspect which increases that delightful cosiness which is always the chief attraction of the house. It is sad to think that the brilliant upholstery must get dimmed with time, that the beautiful carpet must get soiled and worn, and that the mirrors must get chipped and cracked. But when they do, who knows but what the Prince's management may shut it up again for a few days, and open it more glorious than ever? Perhaps the line of mirrors round the circle is the most effective alteration, after the upholstery, but we incline to think that the very best change that has been made is in the substitution of rep backs and leather seats for the oppressive, sticky, utterly uncomfortable velvet which has been removed. A wonderful improvement in the colouring of the proscenium pillars has been made, and in the way of deprecation all we have to say is that we hope the old green curtain has not been abandoned altogether. Were it our affair, we should give up the ineffective drop scene, and let down—say the red curtain—after every act except the last, and then the green. A green curtain is a sacred tradition of the drama.

Turning our attention to the stage, we have to chronicle another of those elaborate productions of Shaksperian plays which we regard with mingled feelings of dislike and admiration. It is impossible not to admire the magnificence with which the piece is put upon the stage; one cannot withhold one's appreciation from the wealth of labour, time, and money which has been expended; and undoubtedly a management is perfectly justified in producing plays in such a manner as to draw large crowds to witness them who otherwise would not come near. But again we have to say, exceedingly against our will, that the acting is unworthy of the scenery, and that the poetry is not enhanced but smothered by too great elaboration of adornment. These gorgeous spectacles only bring out in greater relief than ever that almost complete ignorance of the art of dramatic construction which Shakspere shared in common with his age. That is the reason why "Shakspere spells ruin" to the theatrical manager. It is not because the drama has declined: it is because the drama, as the drama, has improved. It is impossible for a public accustomed to the pitch of perfection to which the art of construction is now carried, to put up with the inconsequence and tedium of Shakspere. The public comes to Mr. Calvert's revivals, not to see Shakspere, but to see the scenery. And it is worth the sight. The scenes which have been painted for this piece are masterpieces of stage art. We are not going to specify or criticise them. One and all are perfect. But, alas, they retard the action of a plot never too brisk. This play, like most of Shakspere's, needs to be run rapidly along. The audience should not be allowed time to criticise the story that is being unfolded to them, or they will infallibly see its wild impossibility.

The *Merchant of Venice* contains some grand writing, but we question whether it is possible to conceive a story more outrageously improbable. Shakespere lived in happy days for dramatists. Whereas a playwright is now-a-days rigorously taken

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Mr. Editor,—While meditating on your last week's Study in Natural History—to wit the "Sermonizer"—it recurred to my memory that, some years ago, one or other of the authorities of this County Palatine, at Preston assembled, made the remarkable and brilliant discovery that orthodox preaching was a sovereign cure for insanity. "Upon this hint," as Othello says, a committee of magistrates was formed to try the experiment whether a parson would or would not be good for mad people. Accordingly they appointed one for three years, and that things might be done according to order, they allowed him £300 a-year. The result was that sermons were found more efficient than strait waistcoats, and the appointment of the parson was made permanent. One witness observed that the operation of the parson upon the patients was so wholesome that the conduct of the mad congregation would put to shame the behaviour of many assemblies of sane worshippers which he had attended. He mentioned, as a favourable example, that among the inmates was a poor wretched Italian, who was remarkable for the violence of his behaviour. "This man," added the witness, "was accustomed to spend his day in uttering loud imprecations, but on the days when divine service was performed, his conduct was more quiet, and the poor creature contented himself with muttering his curses in a low and indistinct tone." It does not appear from the evidence whether this comparative quiescence—this cursing not loud if deep—was attributable to the composing treatment administered by the parson, or to the fact of the Athanasian creed having formed part of that morning's service. If the former, the effect followed the cause in a very natural sequence—an effect often observable at my church in the case of persons of the very soundest minds.—Yours truly, A SERMON-HEARER ON COMPULSION.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

WHENEVER a new theatre is opened in London it is the uniform practice of the critics to term it the prettiest in town. Were this assertion not so hackneyed, we should without hesitation apply it to our Prince's Theatre, now that it is redecorated for the second time. We know no theatre in London worthy to be compared with it for richness, elegance, and, above all, originality of ornament. The sight which the dress circle, filled with what the London critics call "a brilliant audience," presented on the night of Tuesday last was really gorgeous. The ruling colour has been changed from green to red, and all the gas globes, ceilings, pillars, and surroundings, have been tinted. The result is a magnificence which is most striking, and a warmth of aspect which increases that delightful cosiness which is always the chief attraction of the house. It is sad to think that the brilliant upholstery must get dimmed with time, that the beautiful carpet must get soiled and worn, and that the mirrors must get chipped and cracked. But when they do, who knows but what the Prince's management may shut it up again for a few days, and open it more glorious than ever? Perhaps the line of mirrors round the circle is the most effective alteration, after the upholstery, but we incline to think that the very best change that has been made is in the substitution of rep backs and leather seats for the oppressive, sticky, utterly uncomfortable velvet which has been removed. A wonderful improvement in the colouring of the proscenium pillars has been made, and in the way of deprecation all we have to say is that we hope the old green curtain has not been abandoned altogether. Were it our affair, we should give up the ineffective drop scene, and let down—say the red curtain—after every act except the last, and then the green. A green curtain is a sacred tradition of the drama.

Turning our attention to the stage, we have to chronicle another of those elaborate productions of Shaksperian plays which we regard with mingled feelings of dislike and admiration. It is impossible not to admire the magnificence with which the piece is put upon the stage; one cannot withhold one's appreciation from the wealth of labour, time, and money which has been expended; and undoubtedly a management is perfectly justified in producing plays in such a manner as to draw large crowds to witness them who otherwise would not come near. But again we have to say, exceedingly against our will, that the acting is unworthy of the scenery, and that the poetry is not enhanced but smothered by too great elaboration of adornment. These gorgeous spectacles only bring out in greater relief than ever that almost complete ignorance of the art of dramatic construction which Shakspere shared in common with his age. That is the reason why "Shakspere spells ruin" to the theatrical manager. It is not because the drama has declined: it is because the drama, as the drama, has improved. It is impossible for a public accustomed to the pitch of perfection to which the art of construction is now carried, to put up with the inconsequence and tedium of Shakspere. The public comes to Mr. Calvert's revivals, not to see Shakspere, but to see the scenery. And it is worth the sight. The scenes which have been painted for this piece are masterpieces of stage art. We are not going to specify or criticise them. One and all are perfect. But, alas, they retard the action of a plot never too brisk. This play, like most of Shakspere's, needs to be run rapidly along. The audience should not be allowed time to criticise the story that is being unfolded to them, or they will infallibly see its wild impossibility.

The *Merchant of Venice* contains some grand writing, but we question whether it is possible to conceive a story more outrageously improbable. Shakespere lived in happy days for dramatists. Whereas a playwright is now-a-days rigorously taken

to task if his law is not in exact accordance with the very latest decision of the Queen's Bench, and novelists positively have their manuscripts revised by counsel learned in the law, Shakespere was allowed to suppose a Venice where a pound of flesh could be exacted on a bond. Beside so monstrous a departure from the laws of every country that ever had law at all, the stickling for correctness in the way of scenery and costume is absurd. But, after all, what does an absurdity or two extra matter in a play where two young women are allowed to usurp the functions of a court of justice under the disguise of men, bamboozle even their two lovers, and impose upon a shrewd, old, money-lending Jew?

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THE LICENSE AMENDMENT LEAGUE.

THE License Amendment League is not an old society. Its first annual meeting was held in Manchester, on May 30th, 1870, and Alderman Rumney occupied the chair. The list of vice-presidents is a very good one, commencing with the Lord Bishop of Manchester; it includes Sir Thomas Bazley, M.P., Hugh Birley, M.P., W. R. Callender, jun., Sir William Fairbairn, Thomas Hughes, M.P., S. Morley, M.P., Peter Rylands, M.P., Rev. Dr. Waddy, and Thomas Whitworth, M.P. The hon. secretary is the indefatigable Dr. Martin, whose services are entirely gratuitous, and Professor Jevons of Owens College and coal notoriety is one of its strong supporters. The objects of the League are comprised in an Object on "The most speedy and practical improvement in the License Laws." With this object all of us must agree, but unfortunately we are apt to differ about the term "improvements." The League would diminish the number of licensed houses by increasing the annual license fee and by raising the rating qualification. They would withdraw the licenses granted to grocers and confectioners. The League also goes in for permissive measures, such as the right of owners and occupiers to vote the granting of new licenses, and also asks that town councils, &c., may have the right of preventing the extension of the liquor traffic in their localities, but it does not go with the Alliance in demanding the powers of totally and summarily suppressing the sale of intoxicating liquors. Sunday closing is also advocated and also early closing.

Though the League was only, as it were, christened in 1870, its birth took place as far back as 1868, and arose out of a conference held in Birmingham after the Social Science Congress. In fact, the League seems almost to have spontaneously generated out of the discussions at the Congress on crime, pauperism, and disease. At first an effort was made to induce the Alliance folk to moderate their programme; but, as they would not surrender an inch of their demands, the League was formed, and conferences were held up and down the kingdom. Here at Manchester the Rev. Dr. Garrett, Mr. James Taylor, and the Rev. Mr. Stanyer bitterly fought the new society; but the society carried their resolutions almost unanimously. Curiously, Messrs. James Taylor & Co. at that time did not think the League went far enough. Now the National Union Co.—late J. T. & Co.—think them too strong. The prominent members of the League have on several occasions supported the Alliance party at their meetings, but the Alliance, as a body, is very inimical to the League, and at almost all its conferences has striven to out vote its resolutions. However, the League has hitherto managed to win most of the battles. If we had to join any of the Temperance Societies or organizations, we think we should select the League on account of its being the only one with an independent and yet practical programme. The present Suspensory Bill is one of its children, and therefore it has done at least a little good already. A similar society, called the National Association, has long existed in London, and as it and the League hold nearly similar views, an amalgamation is in progress.

Against the absurd multiplication of agitating societies we have long and strongly protested, but the platform occupied by this society is a right and proper one, and one on which all truly temperate men may meet. That the license laws require amending no one will deny. Few will be found even among publicans and victuallers themselves to advocate the existing late hours which the trade are compelled to adopt, and none more bitterly than the trade themselves will oppose the unlimited granting of licenses. Of the whole eight amendments to our present licensing system, there is little doubt but that, slightly modified, two things will be comprised in the promised government bill. "The drinking houses" will be "speedily and equitably suppressed." "All places for the Sale of Liquor" will be closed during not "the whole," but part of Sunday. Singing and Dancing Saloons will come under narrower restrictions. Habitual drunkards will be treated like other lunatics. "A majority of owners within 200 yards of any proposed public-house" will not quite be able to prevent its being licensed, but certainly "no Parliamentary or Municipal Election Committee will be allowed to meet in any place where intoxicating drink is sold." P.S. "No one joining the League is supposed to bind himself to every detail." With this proviso, owing to our observation of its moderation, the *Sphinx* does not object to join the League.

ST. JAMES-THE-LESS, ANCOATS.

WE have often wondered what is done for a living at the various churches fringing the sides of Ancoats, from St. Andrew's at one end to St. Peter's at the other. St. Andrew's, once imbedded in cottages, now stands staring out against the sky and the dead wall of the new Midland Goods Station, and winking with its left eye down Travis-street. St. Peter's, built in a kind of Lombardo-something style, probably out of compliment to the numerous pawnbrokers in the neighbourhood, is still in its native fastnesses. The latest specimen of these churches is the Church of St. James-the-Less, which stands about halfway up Great Ancoats-street; not, however, fronting that broad but rugged path, but modestly retiring up a narrow street. If you go from town, say from the top of Oldham-street, you must keep a careful look-out when you get to the canal region, and then you will perhaps see among the huts and coal-merchants' signboards on your right-hand, a signboard intimating that up the opposite street will be found the Church of St. James-the-Less. We think more might have been made of this board. Why not have gone on to say, "All kinds of Irish Protestant notions kept in stock. Orangemen liberally treated. N.B.—Marriages performed," or something of that kind. We make the rector or the wardens a present of the idea. They may utilize it as they like.

We made an expedition the other Sunday to see what this latest item to churches in Manchester was like, and turning out of Ancoats-lane, opposite the board, into Newton-street, we found there on the right-hand side a church, built of light-coloured brick, which time, smoke, and atmospheric effects had turned into a dingy and cheerless grey. This was St. James-the-Less. You come upon it quite suddenly; for though there is a spire, it can only be seen from a considerable distance, and again when you are close in front of it, so it is not of much use. Entering by the first door we came to, and by an inner glass door, we found ourselves in the church. The apparitor had either gone for a holiday or was enjoying the luxury of undisturbed possession of the vestry, or was doubling his part with the office of organ-blower, for we could not see any, and were indebted to one of the congregation for the share of a pew. Concerning pews, let us make a small digression. The old ones were bad enough, with their tall high backs, but you could somehow accommodate your shoulders to them in time, though they were no doubt built for people who were accustomed to sit upright or lie down. This, however, is an age of lolling and leaning; and, though the modern pew-builder has not invented his open bench to meet those customs, yet he ought not so completely to disregard them. The pew of the period has a low back, with a slight slope backwards, and an edge, or rail, or bead, which soon teaches you where the small of your back is. Egypt is nothing to it. This won't pierce your hand, but will cut you in two at the joint above the waist, or, at all events, leave you with the sensation of having had your back nearly broken. The benches in the nave of the Cathedral are within a trifle of perfection, and beat all that the combined efforts of the Birleys and Mr. Medland Taylor have ever produced.

The service, we found, had just been begun, and although we were too late for the wicked man, we were in time to join the choir in pleading guilty to being miserable sinners. In course of time we were able to take a quiet survey of our surroundings, and found St. James's Minor to be a broad roomy church, with a wide nave and north and south aisles, over each of which was a gallery reaching out to the pillars which divided them from the nave, and a wide and rather shallow chancel. There was a collection of twenty or thirty little boys in the north gallery, which we supposed to be the Sunday School; of girls we saw no trace. The congregation was by no means large. We think we are decidedly within the mark when we say that five times the number of those present would not fill the church.

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to task if his law is not in exact accordance with the very latest decision of the Queen's Bench, and novelists positively have their manuscripts revised by counsel learned in the law, Shakespere was allowed to suppose a Venice where a pound of flesh could be exacted on a bond. Beside so monstrous a departure from the laws of every country that ever had law at all, the stickling for correctness in the way of scenery and costume is absurd. But, after all, what does an absurdity or two extra matter in a play where two young women are allowed to usurp the functions of a court of justice under the disguise of men, bamboozle even their two lovers, and impose upon a shrewd, old, money-lending Jew?

These glaring faults are made conspicuous by the feeble way in which the piece is played. Nerissa, Salarino, and the most difficult portion of Shylock's part, are the only portraits that are wholly satisfactory. To Miss Rose Coghlan the palm must be awarded. Her embodiment of her conception of Nerissa was a perfect picture of a pretty, self-possessed, self-satisfied, and rather saucy, confidential lady's maid. We only wish she had been Portia. Miss Carlisle is quite unsuited to the part. A pleasing actress of less trying parts, she is very weak indeed in that of Portia. Mr. Calvert, in the second act, secured a great success. He thoroughly got outside of himself, and he portrayed the sorrows of the poor old usurer with marked effect. We don't know whether Shakespere meant the audience to pity Shylock, but it does, and Mr. Calvert's acting in this portion of the drama helps to make it. Towards the end, the actor was too much himself again. Mr. Edmonds' Launcelot deserves a word of commendation, and we never in our lives saw Mr. Haywell do so well. In his small but difficult part as the Prince of Arragon, he was not nearly so monotonous as usual in his elocution, and the consequence was a much happier presentment of his part than he has given us before. Whatever has come over Mr. Warde, we can't imagine. Made up like a navvy, he appeared to think he was performing in a melodrama. He could not possibly have acted better had he been burlesquing somebody. His attitudes and goings on were most absurd. We speak thus sharply, because we know that Mr. Warde can do the part well if he will. We lately had the pleasure of remarking that his Tom Shuffleton was about the best thing we had seen him in: Bassanio is the worst. We are constrained to suppose that he has been taking a few lessons from the Gratiano of the drama, Mr. Vandenhoff. This gentleman gets worse and worse. He plays a part which should be played in something the same style as Mr. Lacy's Salarino, just as if it was a fool's.

Our estimate is, of course, taken from the first night's performance, for the inevitable imperfections of which some allowance must be made, though, as the play is understood to have been well rehearsed, the acting is fairly subjected to the test of a high standard. Generally, then, our view of the drama, as an acted drama, is not entirely favourable; but it will be better when things have shaken down, and Messrs. Warde and Vandenhoff have thoroughly reformed both their outward appearance and their acting. As a spectacle it is superb, and must fill the theatre for weeks to come.

As we shall have an opportunity of recurring to the performance, we will leave to another occasion a few remarks on Mr. Arthur Sullivan's music, composed as an accompaniment to the carnival scene, or, as Mr. Calvert prefers to call it, the Lorenzo Masque. It is light and pleasant without being frivolous, and there is a touch or two of humour in the instru. mentation quite worthy of the composer of *Cox and Box*.

HYMN FOR BARRISTERS—"*Brief* life is here our portion."

THE BEST SILENT SEWING MACHINE.—A dumb wife!

BOWLING COURSERS.

There is a pleasure in the pathless "woods."—BYRON.

THE coming season with the long-tailed quadrupeds, which culminates in February at Waterloo, commenced this week. The long-headed bipeds, however, who pursue the jack with such avidity during the summer months, are about to retire for the season, and occupy themselves as they best can with gout, rheumatism, billiards, whist, and other amusements. At Broughton and Longsight there were gatherings on Saturday last. Other engagements prevented our being present at the latter place, but at Broughton we spent an agreeable afternoon, and witnessed some excellent sport. Jack (hares) were strong and numerous, and thirty fine dogs entered for the stakes. Mr. Henry Mason, a member of the club and a genuine old sportsman, well known in the Burton country, presented a splendid set of bowls, enclosed in a large mahogany box, which he had won last year, to be contended for. The several courses were very keenly contested. An immense deal of wagering took place, one gentleman having actually made a ten shilling book, and received deposits thereon, which we recommend to the notice of Mr. Bruce, Home Secretary, who will doubtless look after the culprit, if he does not skedaddle in the meantime.

It was very amusing to see how rapidly many of the favourites came to grief, and there was considerable "dejected 'haviour of the visage" after each catastrophe. The first victim to succumb was Dearman, a prize winner on other courses. He is rather a cobby dog, but a very good goer. On this occasion, however, he was quite outpaced by Llewellyn, a Welsh dog, who beat him hollow, although several times Dearman tried to dodge his hare along the edge of the course, by the hedge side. The next course was another surprise, as Breechloader, another favourite, and winner of two cups, was bowled over by Architect, a comparative novice and outsider. Architect was half way up to his hare before Breechloader made a start, and, although he made a severe wrench at the finish, he overshot the mark, and was defeated by eleven points against six. Fortune, however, is fickle, and the very next course Architect was annihilated by Lignum Vitæ without scoring a point. Lignum Vitæ, in his turn, was completely scrunched by Mr. Doherty's dog Schneider, called, we presume, after Rip Van Winkle's old favourite. Schneider proved himself a very good dog on this occasion, and ran up the final course with the winner, Mr. James Haworth's Oldfox. One of the greatest sensations of the meeting was Schneider's defeating Master Mac-Stinger, an ex-champion, and winner of two cups. Master Mac-Stinger is one of the best coursers in the Club, and yet on this occasion he failed to make a single point, as Schneider kept in front of him the whole way, and never let him see his hare. Muzzleloader did much better than his brother, and at one time looked very like a winner. After scoring nine to Schneider one, the latter got up and scored ten in succession. Previously, Muzzleloader had run and won several severe courses, having beaten such clippers as De Crecy, Batsman, and Fitz-Stinger. The Salford dog, Councillor, ran very well in his early courses, and after running a bye was beaten by Oldfox, the winner. Councillor is a good dog, but makes a terrible noise when he runs, and had quite pumped himself out when he encountered Oldfox. Everybody wished the veteran Malachi to win, and hoped to see him

> Wear the collar of gold
> Which he won from the proud invader,

but the Fates were unpropitious, as he was defeated by Sexton in his fifth tie. Mr. Royle's Tomahawk was first favourite at starting, but although he won his two first ties, having defeated Didymus and Llewellyn, yet he was not in form, and when he came across a clipper like Oldfox he was nowhere, having only scored four to the other's eleven. As the sporting papers say, it was not his day out, although he evidently did his best. The final course was a very exciting one, and lasted so long that it was quite dark before it was finished. Oldfox and Schneider ran neck and neck, and at one time it looked as if the latter was certain to win, as he had secured ten points to Oldfox's eight. Oldfox then made a supreme effort, and took the jack absolutely out of Schneider's mouth. Oldfox is an excellent courser; his owner was warmly congratulated on his success, as this is the first prize which he has won on the Broughton course.

In the course of the match Marvellous was easily defeated by Master Mires, who in his turn succumbed to Councillor. Oldfox, the

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The late Bishop had a "fad," quite inconsistent with the ideas on that subject of the "Protestant brethren" into whose hands he latterly fell, that the altar should be visible from the main body of the church. In accordance with that view, the reading-desk is here placed at the south corner of the chancel, looking straight down the church, and the pulpit is at the other corner; but there is a large eagle, from which the lessons are read, placed so ingeniously between them as to hide from view every part of the table and cover, except a few inches from the floor or foot pace. At the other, or western end of the church, there is no gallery, but the utmost has been done to make that part as much like an organ-gallery as possible. The organ stands up against the wall; two of the singers are placed on each side of it, and the men and women singers, unable to sit in front of it by reason of the space being used for a cross aisle or passage, the first two or three pews on each side the middle aisle are placed facing each other in double rows, like the choir benches of the now popular surpliced choir, the women singers, dressed with the taste peculiar to the district, occupying the places usually held by the rosy, white-robed chorister boy. The effect in the service is peculiar. You seem to be within two fires. You have the parson—minister, we believe, he is called in those parts—saying his say in a voice both loud and clear, a few yards in front of you, and, while you are still beholding him, you are startled by the choir thundering out the response, loud but not clear, as if close to the back of your head. There was one of the choir who shouted out the bass in a way that reminded us of the severe simplicity of the choir-man who has sung (?) bass for so many years at the Cathedral.

Nearly everything at this church seems to betray a thirst for novelty, a desire for making little peddling changes, altering for altering's sake rather than for improvement. It is, if we mistake not, one of the so-called bulwarks against Rome. Because, forsooth, the Roman Catholics who largely people this neighbourhood had built their own place of worship in a back street hard by, a North of Ireland Protestant—a minister of a church having a theology and articles which, thank goodness, were never those of the Church of England—must needs settle himself down here, and with the aid of Orangeism and party spirit, sow the seeds of those baneful plants—mistrust, dissension, and ill-will—which bloom with such fatal effect in the sister isle.

The musical part of the service was of the prevailing kind. The canticles and psalms were chanted to the usual florid chant, the responses intoned, and the hymns sung with tolerable spirit. The lessons were read by a young gentleman, who walked from his pew wearing a frock coat by way of surplice. Either he was not tall enough or the lectern was too high, for the book-rest seemed to intercept a great deal of the sound of his voice. He seemed unable to escape the alteration infection, for at the end he informed us that—"thus" endeth the first lesson. It is a small matter truly, but it seems to show the pervading spirit. During the intervening chant we speculated as to whether, there being women singers in the choir, the second lesson would be read by the young lady in the pew of the reader of the first lesson or by him. He seemed, however, to think he had got hold of a good thing, for he read the second lesson also.

The Rector, the Rev. W. Coghlan, read the service distinctly, and with the deliberation of a practised reader. What quarrel he had with the collect for the day we couldn't make out, but he omitted it from its place before the second collect—"for peace." He took it, however, in its place among the "table prayers," so we put the omission down to carelessness. While at this part of the service we may mention the curious way in which Mr. Coghlan altered the forms in the Prayer-book for giving notice where the Epistle and Gospel were to be found. Did you ever hear an Irishman say "begin," when there was a possibility of using the apparently finer word "commence?" The Epistle therefore was in such a chapter "commencing" at the so and so verse, although "beginning" is the word prescribed. As to the Gospel, it was "the Gospel written by the hand of St. Matthew," such a chapter and such a verse. What, in the name of goodness, and of that holy man, St. Bees, of apiarian memory, is the meaning of these senseless alterations? Is it to keep up a sense of jarring and discord that is agreeable to the Keltic mind, or to remind us, by a wide stretch of imagination, of the immutability of all earthly things?

This part being over, the minister retired for a short rest in the vestry and to array himself for the sermon, during which the choir and some of the congregation refreshed themselves with a hymn. The saying of the service is evidently hard work, for while we were having a similar musical treat before the Communion service, the clergyman, on entering within "the rails," flung himself at once into one of the chairs, and sate there cross-legged, while we stood and the choir "praised God by singing" Keble's morning hymn. The hymn-book in use was one we never saw before. It appears to have been issued by a Dublin society established for the suppression of vice. Surely there is something of the kind quite as good in the land of Mr. Coghlan's adoption. If *Hymns Ancient and Modern* are too pronounced, there is the Christian Knowledge Society's collection, besides others not so complete and less known to fame. These may, however, have been bought cheap, since the Irish Church dis-establishment, like part of a bankrupt's stock sold at "an alarming sacrifice."

Presently the preacher appeared in all the glory of a pair of very long "bands" and a balloon-sleeved black Geneva preaching gown, and was securely fastened up in the pulpit by the pro-apparitor. Now, we thought, we shall, perhaps, forget the little irregularities, one-half of which, on "the other side," would have raised the mighty phalanx of Gallagher and Co. to the rescue. "Was you ever in St. James-the-Less, Mr. Coghlan's church?" inquired a friend, who suspected our partiality for wandering after strange churches. On our admitting that we had not been there, we were strongly recommended to go, and were assured that "he's a splendid preacher." Mr. Coghlan took his text from an obscure corner of one of the minor prophets, and then ostentatiously closed his Bible. Two minutes were sufficient to convince us that we were in for it. The preacher began at 11.55 by a clock in the front of the gallery, and finished at 12.22, certainly within the half-hour by the dial, but it seemed an age. It was a mouthy, wordy, washy series of commonplaces, the subject being that "the Lord is good." Why, we thought with the Roman audience, *Quis vituperavit?* Or even with Mrs. Gamp, "Who denies of it?" There are some axioms or postulates which are commonly taken for granted, and surely a congregation assembled for Christian worship might be fairly considered not to have any doubt about this subject, or else their mere presence was a revolting inconsistency. It was, besides, so very colourless that it might have been preached in Grosvenor Street or Cross Street, and, but for a few expressions that would not fill half-a-dozen of these lines, might have been heard in either of the Old Testament churches in the Cheetham Hill Road, if they have anything so bad there. All this verbiage was said with an air and with modulation of voice and with (supposed) suitable action, which certainly entitled the preacher to the title splendid, if it only did not matter whether he said anything or not. We were dispirited and distressed by the close, and the preacher, in a short prayer afterwards, did not in the words of the form given him for use, ask that "the words we had heard" might be effectual, but that the words he had spoken might be of service to the congregation, and so on in an entirely unauthorized extempore utterance of three or four minutes long. Did he think, we wondered afterwards, about what he had been saying, and believe that it had been of the slightest good to man, woman, or child? Was there nothing in the scripture portions of the day from which a lesson could have been learned or a moral drawn—from the Collect, or the Epistle, or, above all, from the Gospel for the day, sparkling with gems of the Master's own, or from Keble's beautiful poem for the day—

Sweet nurslings of the vernal skies.

But the church is rightly named. If you want the infinitely little, go to St. James-the-Less.

THEOLOGICAL BITTERNESS OR RUSTIC SIMPLICITY?—A Scotch landowner had erected on his estate a place of worship in connection with the Episcopal communion, and had thereby unconsciously excited among his people some unpleasant misgivings. Soon afterwards, on inspecting a newly erected sheep-pen, he remarked to a hind who attended him that it was too extravagantly ornamented. "Deed is it, sir," said the hind; "it is owre Episcopal chapel lookin'!"

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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